FIGURE DRAWING

STEP•BY•STEP

WENDON BLAKE

Urheberrechtlich geschütztes Material

Introduction 4
Getting Started 5
Equipment 6
Proportions: Front View 8
Proportions: Side View 9
Proportions: Three-quarter View 10
Proportions: Back View 11
Drawing the Male Torso: Front View 12
Drawing the Female Torso: Front View 13
Drawing the Male Torso: Three-quarter View 14
Drawing the Female Torso: Three-quarter View 15
Drawing the Male Torso: Side View 16
Drawing the Female Torso: Side View 17
Drawing the Male Head 18
Drawing the Female Head 19
Drawing the Male Arm and Hand 20
Drawing the Female Arm and Hand 21
Drawing the Male Leg and Foot 22
Drawing the Female Leg and Foot 24
Drawing the Male Figure 26
Drawing the Female Figure 30
Pencil Drawing 34
Demonstration 1. Standing Male Figure 36
Demonstration 2. Standing Female Figure 40
Demonstration 3. Seated Female Figure 44
Chalk Drawing 48
Demonstration 4. Bending Male Figure 50
Demonstration 5. Kneeling Female Figure 54
Demonstration 6. Female Back 58
Charcoal Drawing 62
Demonstration 7. Twisting Male Figure 64
Demonstration 8. Crouching Male Figure 68
Demonstration 9. Reclining Female Figure 72
Demonstration 10. Seated Male Figure 76
Lighting 80

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Figure Drawing. From the time of the ancient Greeks, artists have regarded the male and female nude figure as the ultimate statement of humanity's ideals of heroism and beauty. Many great artists have devoted their entire lives to painting, sculpting, and drawing the nude figure. For the forms of the human body are endlessly fascinating. Every pose, gesture, and view presents a new challenge. Thus, artists love to draw the nude not only because the beauty of the human body is so hypnotic, but because there's always something new to learn. In fact, many teachers feel that drawing the nude is the *best* way to learn how to draw.

Proportions. Before you begin to draw the figure, it's important to establish a clear mental image of the proportions of the male and female bodies. The traditional system is to measure in head lengths. The figure drawings in this book are based on the rule that the height of the figure is roughly eight times the length of the head. Artists usually say that the figure is "eight heads tall." The legs, arms, and other sections of the body are also measured in heads. *Figure Drawing* begins by presenting this system of proportions in a series of drawings of standing male and female figures, seen from different angles.

Learning to Draw the Body. Next, you'll watch noted artist Uldis Klavins demonstrate how to draw the various parts of the body step by step. Looking at the body from various views—front, three-quarter, and side—Klavins demonstrates how to draw the male and female torso, head, arm and hand, and leg and foot.

Drawing the Total Figure. Having shown how to draw the components of the figure, Klavins then goes on to demonstrate how to assemble all this information in complete drawings of the male and female figure. You'll watch him construct all the forms of the figure from head to toe, applying the systems of proportion and the step-by-step drawing methods you've learned in earlier pages. These complete figure demonstrations, like the preceding demonstrations of the various parts of the body, show the four fundamental stages in executing a figure drawing. First Klavins shows you how to establish the major forms with simple guidelines. Then he shows you how to refine these lines to make the forms more accurate. He blocks in the broad areas of shadow. And then he completes the drawing by refining contours, strengthening the shadows, and adding details.

Step-by-Step Demonstrations. In a series of more detailed demonstrations, Klavins then shows you how to draw ten different figures step by step. He begins with simple poses, gradually introducing more complex ones. The first three demonstrations are pencil drawings of standing male and female figures, and a seated female figure. The next three demonstrations are chalk drawings: a bending male and a kneeling female figure, and a back view of a seated female figure. And the last four demonstrations are charcoal drawings of a twisting male figure, a crouching male figure, a reclining female figure, and a seated male figure. The ten demonstrations show every drawing operation in precise detail.

Drawing Media. These ten step-by-step demonstrations are executed in a variety of pencil, chalk, and charcoal techniques to reveal the full range of possibilities in these versatile media. You'll see how to build contour, form, and light and shade with various combinations of lines, strokes, and blended tones. And the drawings are executed on a variety of papers to show you the effects of varied drawing surfaces.

Finding Models. As most artists and art students have discovered, people aren't nearly as shy as they used to be. Members of your family, friends, and acquaintances are accustomed to today's revealing beachwear and resort fashions, and so they're often flattered by an invitation to pose. If you prefer to draw a professional model, check your nearest art school, college, or university to see whether they've got a so-called life class which you can join. Sometimes a life-drawing class includes the services of an instructor, but it's also common for a school to hire a professional model and simply provide a studio in which a group of students or serious amateurs can draw for several hours, merely paying a modest admission fee. You can also form your own life class with friends, working in someone's home and sharing the cost of the model's fee. To find a professional model for your own life class, you might call your local art school, college, or university to find out where they get their models. Professional artists often contact dance or drama schools whose students are willing to model to finance their professional training. The important thing is to work from the living figure—not from photographs—and to draw as often as you can. If you join a life class—or form your own—be sure to go at least once a week. When you go to the beach or to the swimming pool, take your sketch pad. Ask permission to make drawings at dance classes and the local gym. If there's a museum nearby whose collection includes Greek or Roman sculpture, you're especially lucky: you can draw beautifully proportioned models who never get tired and never move!

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Keep It Simple. The best way to start drawing is to get yourself just two things: a pencil and a pad of white drawing paper about twice the size of the page you're now reading. An ordinary office pencil will do—but test it to make sure that you can make a pale gray line by gliding it lightly over the paper, and a rich black line by pressing a bit harder. If you'd like to buy something at the art-supply store, ask for an HB pencil, which is a good all-purpose drawing tool, plus a thicker, darker pencil for bolder work, usually marked 4B, 5B, or 6B. Your drawing pad should contain sturdy white paper with a very slight texture—not as smooth as typing paper. (Ask for cartridge paper in Britain.) To get started with chalk drawing, all you need is a black pastel pencil or a Conté pencil. And just two charcoal pencils will give you a good taste of charcoal drawing: get one marked "medium" and another marked "soft." You can use all these different types of pencils on the same drawing pad.

Pencils. When we talk about pencil drawing, we usually mean *graphite* pencil. This is usually a cylindrical stick of black, slightly slippery graphite surrounded by a thicker cylinder of wood. Artists' pencils are divided roughly into two groupings: soft and hard. A soft pencil will make a darker line than a hard pencil. Soft pencils are usually marked B, plus a number to indicate the degree of softness—3B is softer and blacker than 2B. Hard pencils are marked H and the numbers work the same way—3H is harder and makes a paler line than 2H. HB is considered an all-purpose pencil because it falls midway between hard and soft. Most artists use more soft pencils than hard pencils. When you're ready to experiment with a variety of pencils, buy a full range of soft ones from HB to 6B. You can also buy cylindrical graphite sticks in various thicknesses to fit into metal or plastic holders. And if you'd like to work with broad strokes, you can get rectangular graphite sticks about as long as your index finger.

Chalk. A black pastel pencil or Conté pencil is just a cylindrical stick of black chalk and, like the graphite pencil, it's surrounded by a cylinder of wood. But once you've tried chalk in pencil form, you should also get a rectangular black stick of hard pastel or Conté crayon. You may also want to buy cylindrical sticks of black chalk that fit into metal or plastic holders.

Charcoal. Charcoal pencils usually come in two forms. One form is a thin stick of charcoal surrounded by wood, like a graphite pencil. Another form is a stick of charcoal surrounded by a cylinder of paper that you can peel off in a narrow strip to expose fresh charcoal as the point wears down. When you want a complete "palette" of charcoal pencils, get just three of them, marked "hard," "medium," and "soft." (Some manufacturers grade charcoal pencils HB through 6B, like graphite pencils; HB is the hardest and 6B is the softest.) You should also buy a few sticks of natural charcoal. You can get charcoal "leads" to fit into metal or plastic holders like those used for graphite and chalk.

Paper. You could easily spend your life doing wonderful drawings on ordinary white drawing paper, but you should try other kinds. Charcoal paper has a delicate, ribbed texture and a very hard surface that makes your stroke look rough and allows you to blend your strokes to create velvety tones. And you should try some *really* rough paper with a ragged, irregular "tooth" that makes your strokes look bold and granular. Ask your art-supply dealer to show you his roughest drawing papers. Buy a few sheets and try them out.

Erasers (Rubbers). For pencil drawing, the usual eraser is soft rubber, generally pink or white, which you can buy in a rectangular shape about the size of your thumb or in the form of a pencil, surrounded by a peel-off paper cylinder like a charcoal pencil. For chalk and charcoal drawing, the best eraser is kneaded rubber (or putty rubber), a gray square of very soft rubber that you can squeeze like clay to make any shape that's convenient. A thick, blocky soap eraser is useful for cleaning up the white areas of the drawing.

Odds and Ends. You also need a wooden drawing board to support your drawing pad—or perhaps a sheet of soft fiberboard to which you can tack loose sheets of paper. Get some single-edge razor blades or a sharp knife (preferably with a safe, retractable blade) for sharpening your drawing tools; a sandpaper pad (like a little book of sandpaper) for shaping your drawing tools; some pushpins or thumbtacks (drawing pins in Britain); a paper cylinder (as thick as your thumb) called a stomp, for blending tones; and a spray can of fixative, which is a very thin, virtually invisible varnish to keep your drawings from smudging.

Work Area. When you sit down to work, make sure that the light comes from your left if you're right-handed, and from your right if you're left-handed, so your hand won't cast a shadow on your drawing paper. A jar is a good place to store pencils, sharpened end up to protect the points. Store sticks of chalk or charcoal in a shallow box or in a plastic silverware tray with convenient compartments—which can be good for storing pencils too. To keep your erasers clean, store them apart from your drawing tools—in a separate little box or in a compartment of that plastic tray.

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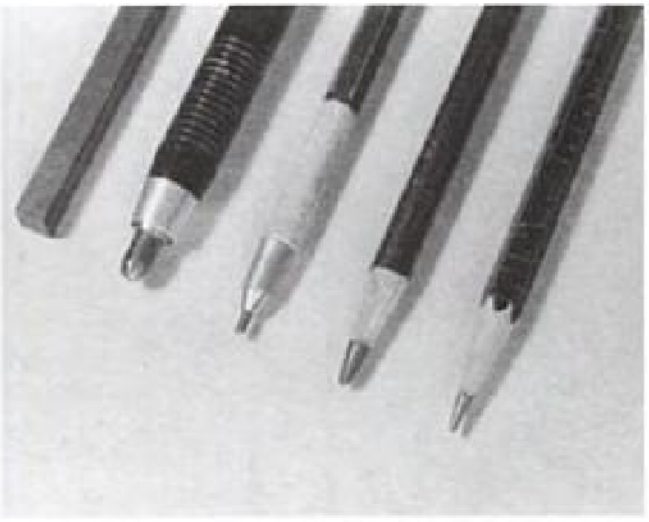
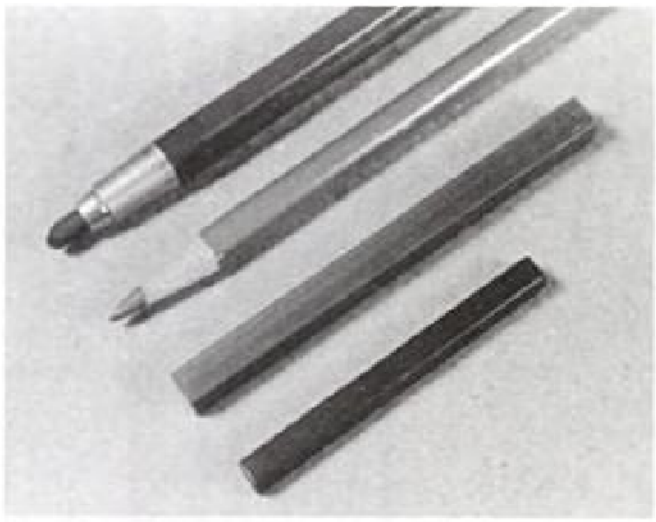
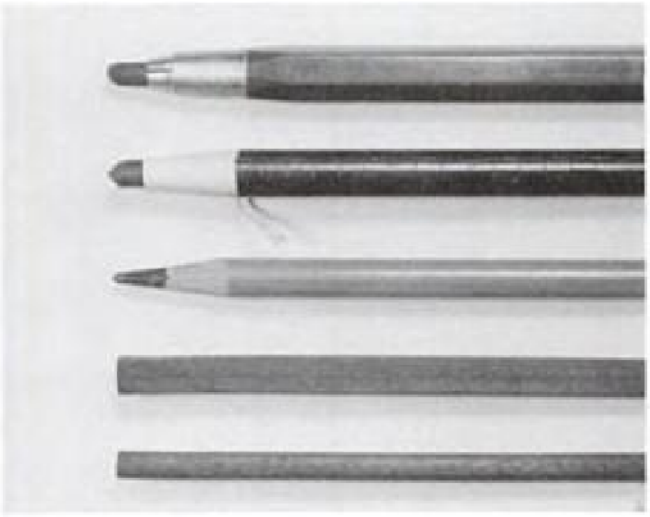


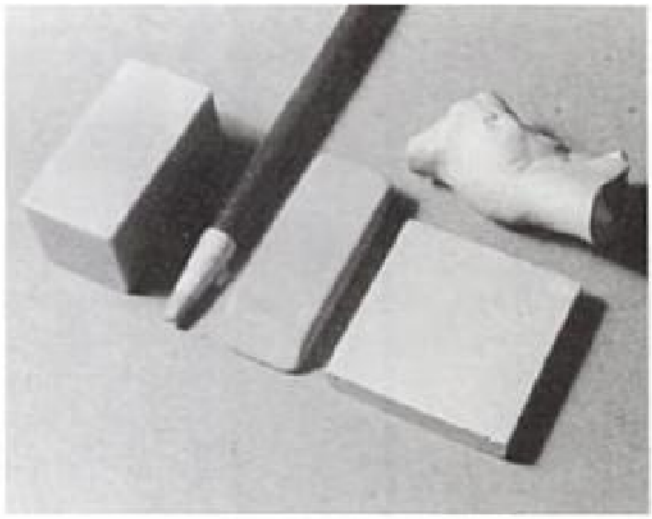
Pencils. The common graphite pencil comes in many forms. Looking from right to left, you see the all-purpose HB pencil; a thicker, softer pencil that makes a broader, blacker mark; a metal holder that grips a slender, cylindrical lead; a plastic holder that grips a thick lead; and finally a rectangular stick of graphite that makes a broad, bold mark on the paper. It's worthwhile to buy some pencils as well as two or three different types of holders to see which ones feel most comfortable in your hand.



Chalk. Shown here are four kinds of chalk. Looking from the lower right to the upper left, you see the small, rectangular Conté crayon; a larger, rectangular stick of hard pastel; hard pastel in the form of a pencil that's convenient for linear drawing; and a cylindrical stick of chalk in a metal holder. All these drawing tools are relatively inexpensive, so it's a good idea to try each one to see which one you like best.



Charcoal. This versatile drawing medium comes in many forms. Looking up from the bottom of this photo, you see a cylindrical stick of natural charcoal; a rectangular stick of natural charcoal; a charcoal pencil; another kind of charcoal pencil—with paper which you gradually tear away as you wear down the point; and a cylindrical stick of charcoal in a metal holder. Natural charcoal smudges and erases easily, so it's good for broad tonal effects. A charcoal pencil makes firm lines and strokes, but the strokes don't blend as easily.



Erasers (Rubbers). From left to right, you see the common soap eraser, best for cleaning broad areas of bare paper; a harder, pink eraser in pencil form for making precise corrections in small areas of graphite-pencil drawings; a bigger pink eraser with wedge-shaped ends for making broader corrections; and a square of kneaded rubber (putty rubber) that's best for chalk and charcoal drawing. Kneaded rubber squashes like clay (as you see in the upper right) and can take any shape you want. Press the kneaded rubber down on the paper and pull away; scrub only when necessary.

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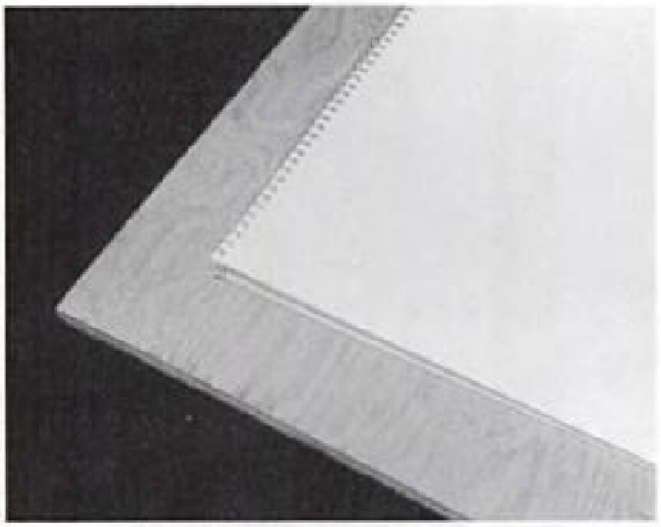
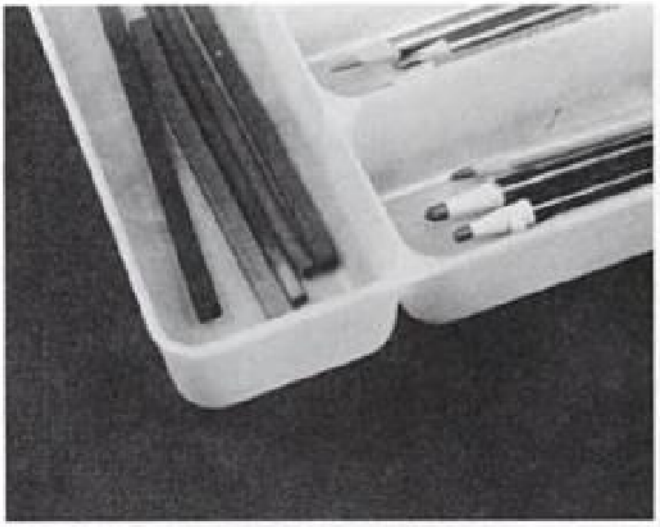
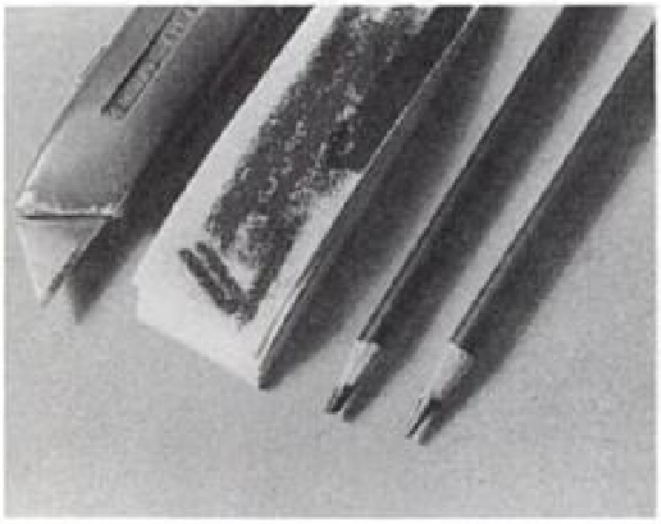


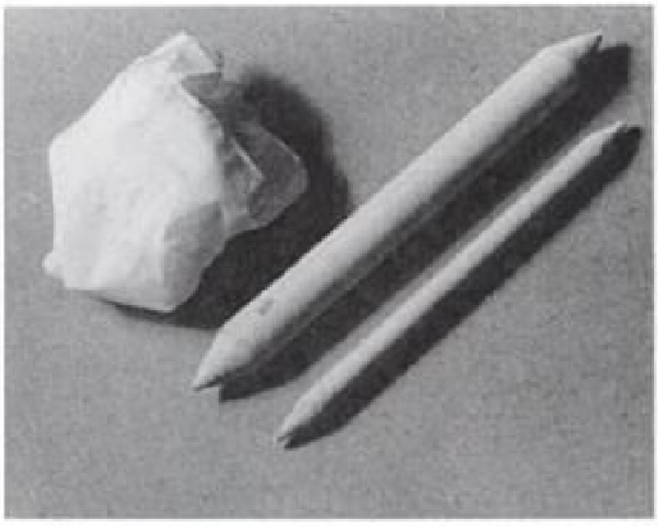
Drawing Board and Pad. Drawing paper generally comes in pads that are bound on one edge like a book. Most convenient is the spiral binding like the one you see here, since each page folds behind the others when you've finished a drawing. The pad won't be stiff enough to give you proper support by itself, so get a wooden drawing board from your art-supply store—or simply buy a piece of plywood or fiberboard. If you buy your drawing paper in sheets, rather than pads, buy a piece of soft fiberboard to which you can tack your paper.



Storage. Store your pencils, sticks of chalk, and sticks of charcoal with care—don't just toss them into a drawer where they'll rattle around and break. The compartments of a silverware container (usually made of plastic) provide good protection and allow you to organize your drawing tools into groups. Or you can simply collect long, shallow cardboard boxes—the kind that small gifts often come in.



Knife and Sandpaper Pad. The pencil at the right has been shaped to a point with a mechanical pencil sharpener. The other pencil has been shaped to a broader point with a knife and sandpaper. The knife is used to cut away the wood without cutting away much of the lead. Then the pencil point is rubbed on the sandpaper to create a broad, flat tip. Buy a knife with a retractable blade that's safe to carry. To the right of the knife is a sandpaper pad that you can buy in most art-supply stores; it's like a small book, bound at one end so you can tear off the graphite-coated pages.



Stomps and Cleansing Tissue. To blend pencil, chalk, or charcoal, you can buy stomps of various sizes in any good art-supply store. A stomp is made of tightly rolled paper with a tapered end and a sharp point. Use the tapered part for blending broad areas and the tip for blending small areas. A crumpled cleansing tissue can be used to spread a soft tone over a large area. Natural charcoal is so soft that you can dust off an unsatisfactory area with the tissue.

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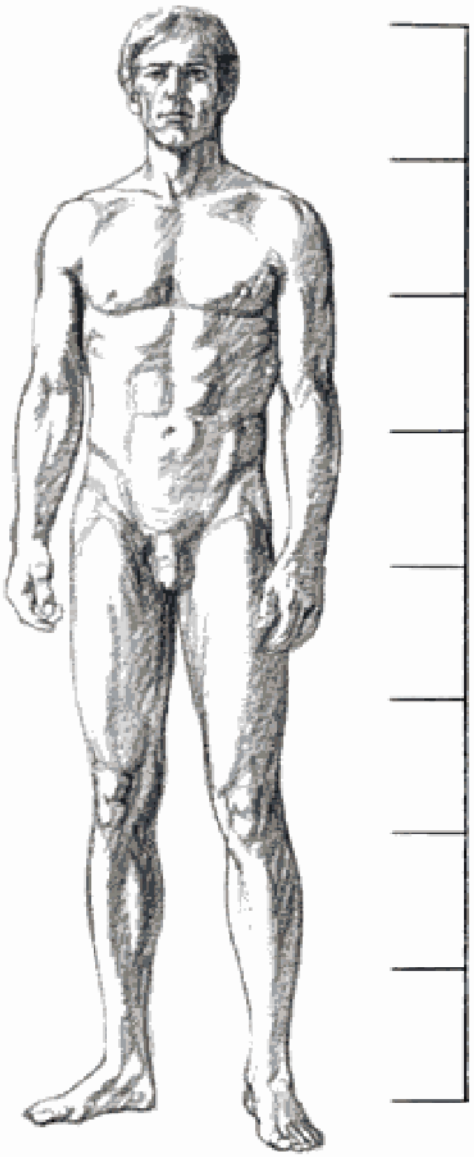
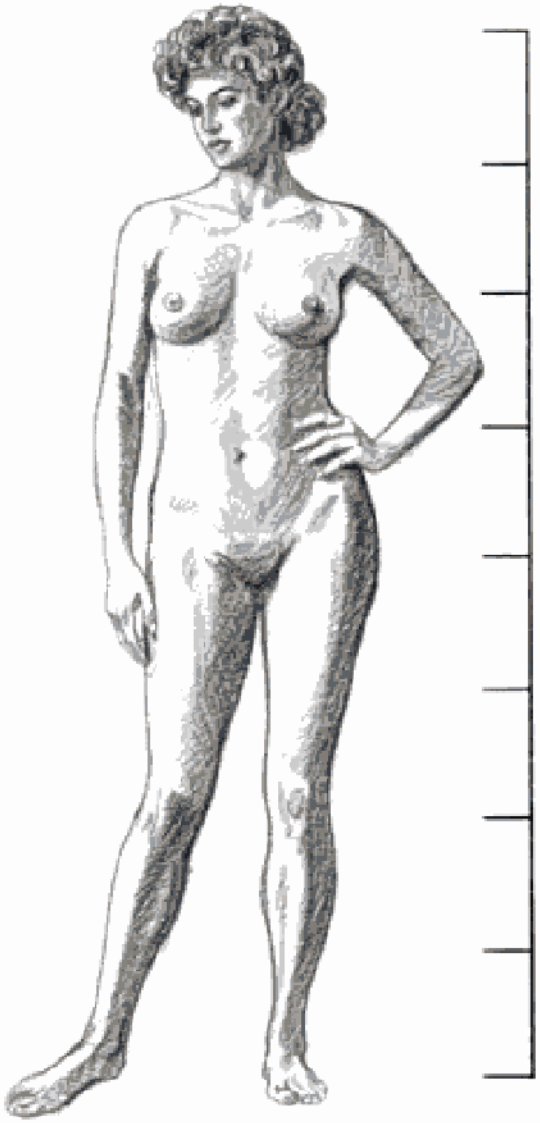


Male Figure. Although no two models are exactly alike, it's helpful to memorize the proportions of an "ideal" figure and keep these proportions in mind as you draw. Most artists use the head as the unit of measurement. They generally visualize a figure that's eight heads tall. The torso is about three heads tall from the chin to the crotch, divided into thirds at the nipple line and navel. The upper leg is two heads tall, and so is the lower leg. At its widest point, the shoulders, the ideal male figure measures just over two head lengths.



Female Figure. The ideal female figure is also about eight heads tall, though you can see that she's just a bit shorter than the ideal male figure at your left. At its two widest points, the shoulders and hips, she measures about two head lengths. In both these figures, notice that the elbows are approximately three head lengths down from the top of the head and align with the narrowest point of the waist, while the wrists align with the crotch. Naturally, these alignments change when the model bends her arm.

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Male Figure. The proportions are essentially the same when you see the figure from the side. Note that the lower edge of the chest muscle comes about halfway down the upper arm. The lower edge of the buttocks is slightly more than four heads down from the top of the figure—a bit farther down than the crotch. As the model bends his arms, the elbows no longer align with the waist but rise farther up. Seen from the side, the foot measures slightly more than one head length.

Female Figure. In profile, the female figure has the same proportions as the male figure, although she's slightly smaller. Once again, you can see that the breast comes about halfway down the upper arm, and the lower edge of the buttocks is just below the midpoint of the figure. From the shoulder to the wrist, the arm length is slightly under three heads, which means that the upper and lower arms should each measure roughly one and one-half heads. As in the male figure, the female foot is just over one head long. The outstretched hand is slightly less than one head long.

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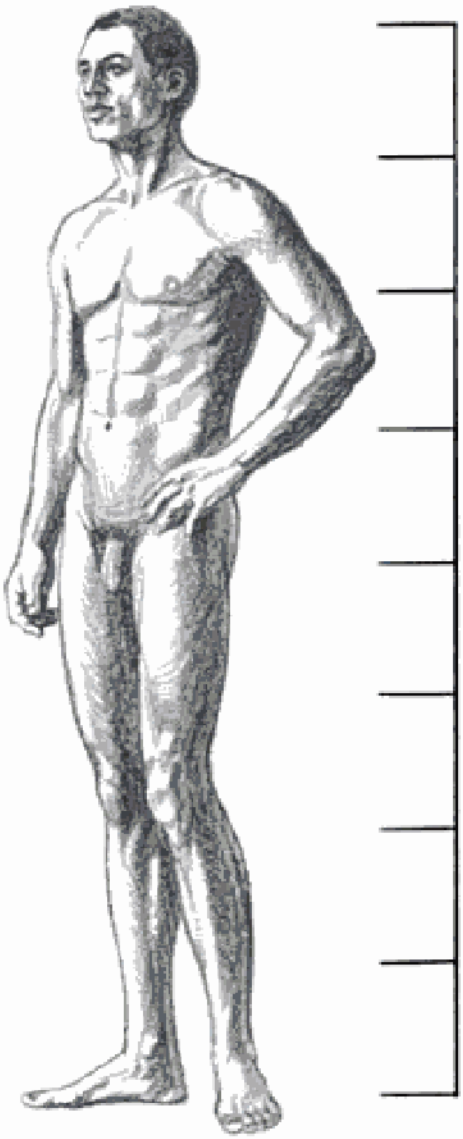
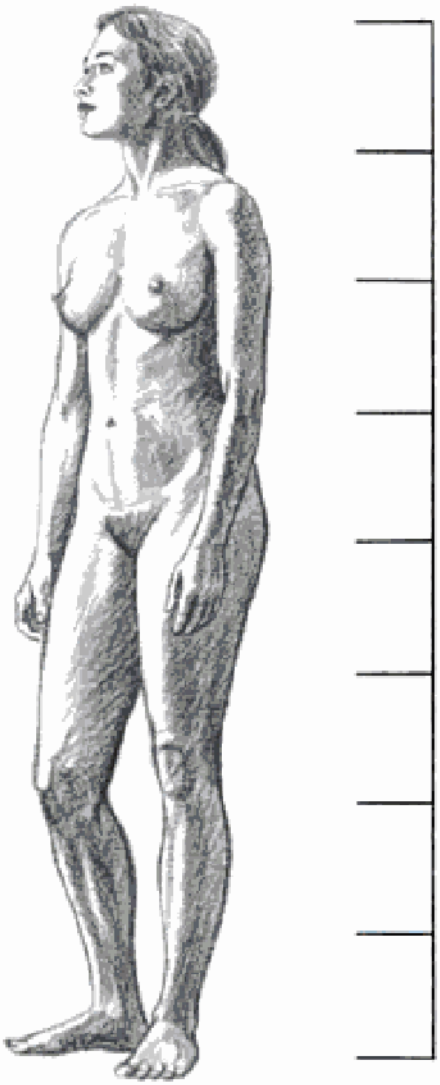


Male Figure. When the male figure turns to a three-quarter view, the vertical proportions remain the same, but the horizontal proportions change. The shoulders are less than two heads wide, and the entire torso has narrowed slightly. Study the proportions of the bent arm: the upper and lower arms are each approximately one and one-half heads long, while the hand is just under one head long. As the arm bends, the elbow rises above the midpoint of the figure, and the wrist no longer aligns with the crotch. When one leg bends and the other remains straight, the knee of the bent leg tends to drop slightly.



Female Figure. Here you can see clearly how the knee drops slightly as the leg bends. In the three-quarter view, the shoulders and hips are no longer two heads wide, but have become narrower. (As the model keeps turning toward the side view, those widths become narrower still.) The lower edge of the breast comes about halfway down the upper arm. The elbows align more or less with the navel, although the female navel is usually slightly lower than that of the male. The lower edge of the knee is two heads up from the heel.

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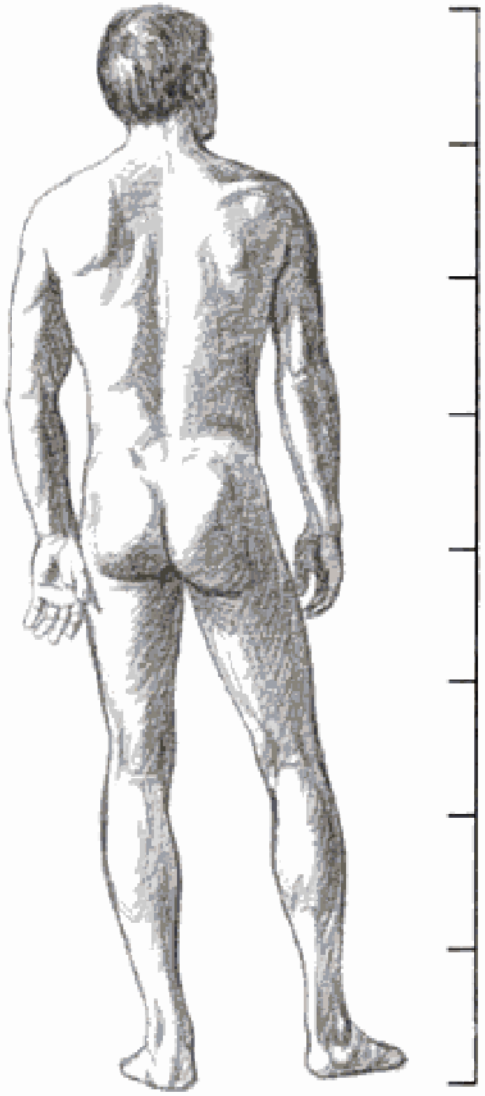

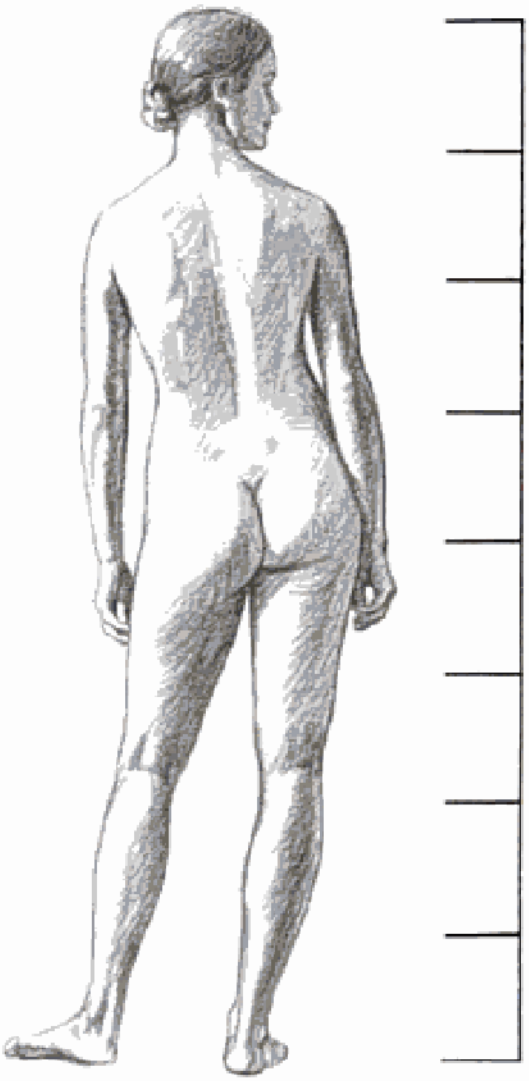

Male Figure. Seen from behind, the figure displays the same proportions as in the front view—with some subtle differences. The lower edges of the buttocks fall slightly below the midpoint of the figure—unlike the crotch, which is usually just four heads down from the top of the head. The horizontal creases at the backs of the knees, dividing the upper and lower legs, are slightly more than two heads up from the heel—in contrast with the lower edges of the front of the knees, which are a bit farther down. Note that the lower edges of the shoulder blades are two heads down from the top of the figure, which means one head down from the neck. The shoulders measure a shade over two head lengths, while the hips measure about one and one-half.

Female Figure. In this view, you can see one of the major differences between the male and female figures. In the male figure at your left, the shoulders are distinctly wider than the hips, while the female figure is equally wide at both points—roughly two head lengths. Once again, you can see that the crease that divides the upper and lower legs in back is distinctly higher than the lower edge of the knee that you see in the front view. Obviously, not every model will have the ideal proportions you see in these drawings. But if you stay reasonably close to these measurements, making some adaptations to suit each model, your figure proportions will always be convincing.

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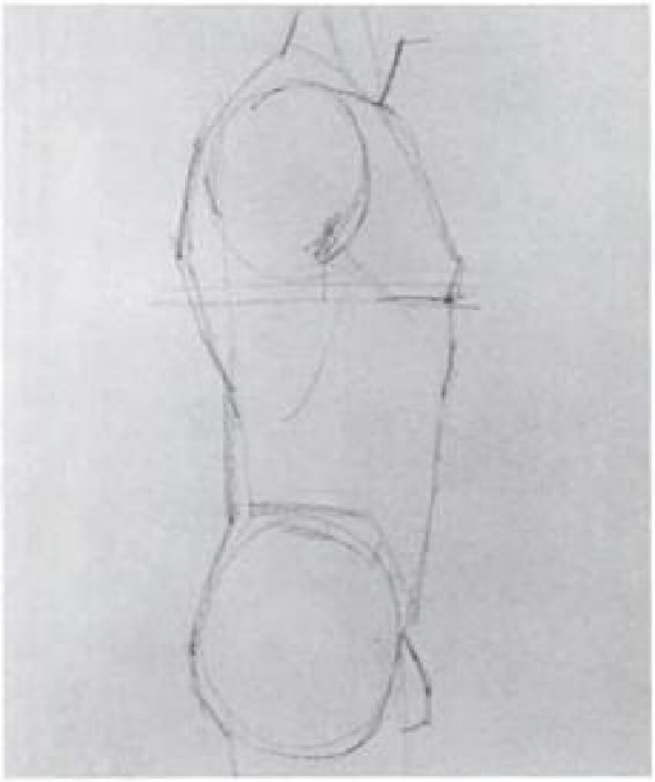
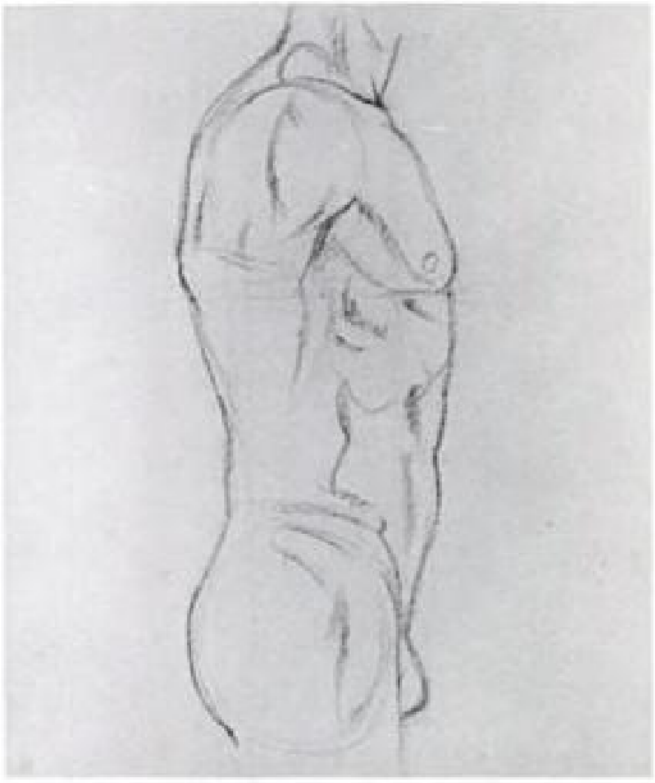
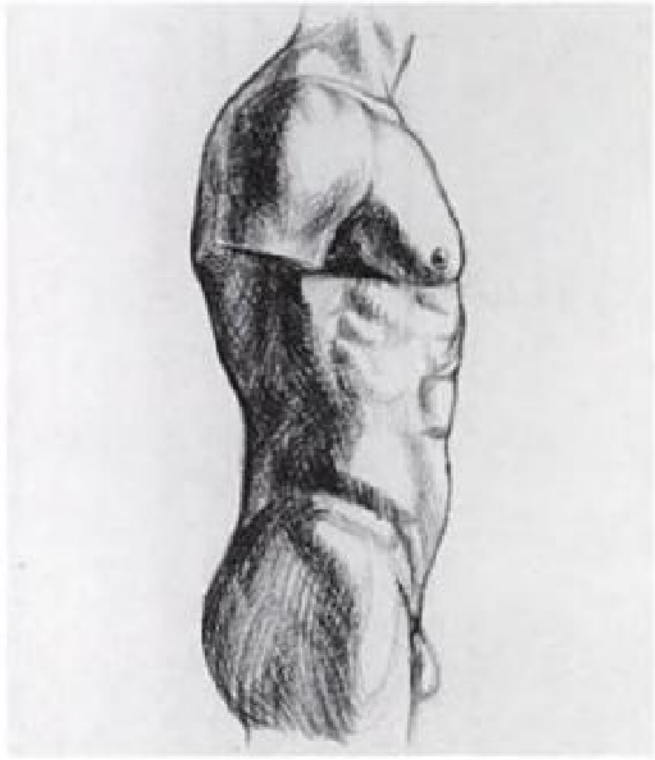


Step 1. The torso is a tapering box, with a slanted rectangle for the chest muscle and egg shapes for the shoulder and hip. The back curves out at the shoulder, in at the waist, and then out again at the buttocks.



Step 2. The blocky shapes of the "diagram" are rounded off in the realistic line drawing. The neck normally leans forward, the upper torso leans backward, and the lower torso leans slightly forward again to meet the upper torso.

Step 3. The light comes from the right, placing the left sides of the forms in shadow, which the artist blocks in with parallel strokes. Study the alignments: the point of the shoulder is directly above the center of the hip.



Step 4. When the artist builds up the tones—accentuating the contours with the pencil point—you can see the gradation of light, halftone, shadow, and reflected light most clearly on the chest muscle, shoulder, and hip.

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Step 1. The female figure shows the same angular "movement" as that of the male. The neck tilts forward, the upper torso leans back, and the lower torso tilts forward to meet the upper torso at the waist.

Step 2. The pencil point defines the edges of the forms and the contours of the shadows within the forms. The female buttocks protrude more than those of the male, but the center of the shoulder still aligns with the center of the hip.

Step 3. The light source is at the left, illuminating the front of the figure and placing the back—as well as much of the side—in shadow. The artist follows the shadow guidelines of Step 2 as he blocks in the tones.

Step 4. The finished torso shows the gradation of light, halftone, shadow, and reflected light, plus the cast shadow beneath the breast. Within the lighted abdomen, halftones suggest anatomical detail.

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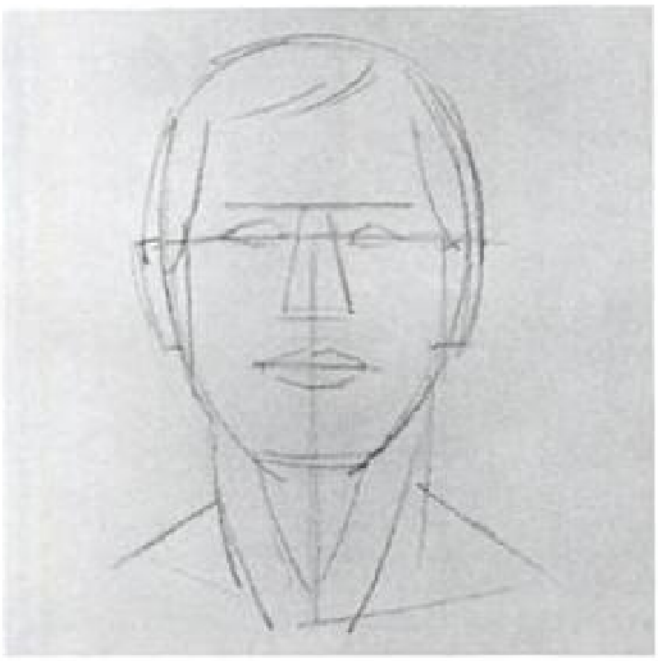
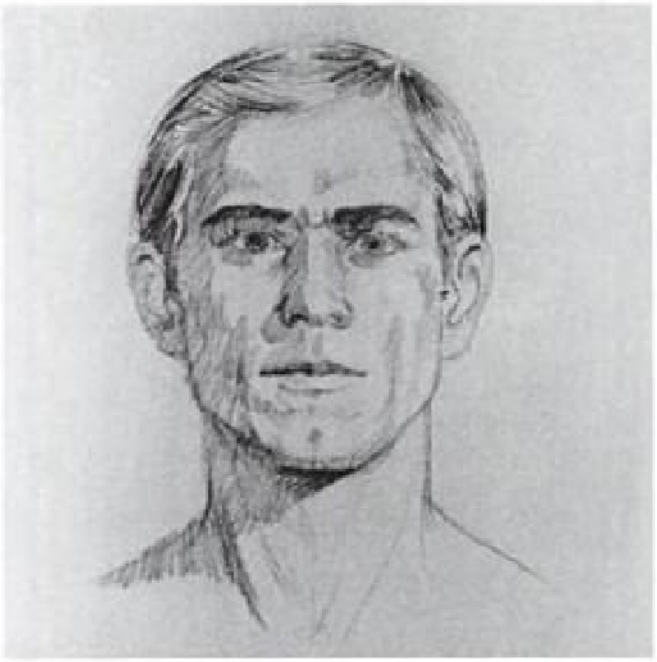


Step 1. The artist draws an egg shape with a vertical center line. Horizontal lines locate the features: the eyes are halfway down; the underside of the nose is midway between eyes and chin; the division between the lips is one-third down from nose to chin. Over these guidelines, he places the features, squares up the jaw, and indicates the hair.

Step 2. Study the proportions of the realistic head, drawn over the guidelines of Step 1. The height of the head, from chin to crown, is one and one-half times the width from cheek to cheek. At its midpoint, the head is "five eyes wide." The space between the eyes, and the underside of the nose, are both "one eye wide." The ears align with the eyes (or eyebrows) and mouth.



Step 3. The artist blocks in the shadows, following the guidelines you saw in Step 2. The light comes from the right, and so the shadow is on the left side of the head. The eye sockets and upper lip curve away from the light, and so they contain deep shadows. The corner of the nose casts a slanted shadow to the left; the chin casts a shadow across the neck in the same direction.

Step 4. The shadows on the left sides of the forms are darkened. So are the undersides of the forms that curve inward, away from the light: the eye sockets, bottom of the nose, upper lip, underside of the lower lip, and chin. The artist strengthens the halftones in the lighted areas, defines the details of the features, and reinforces the outer contours.

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Step 1. The head is turned slightly to the left in this three-quarter view. Again, the artist draws an egg shape with a vertical center line—which moves to the left as the head turns—plus horizontal lines to locate the features. Then the features go over these guidelines. The artist indicates the shape of the shadow that runs down the forehead, cheek, and jaw.

Step 2. Over the egg, the artist traces the curves of the forehead, cheek, jaw, and chin; defines the eyebrows and eyelids, adding the irises and pupils; indicates the tip of the nose and the nostril wing as separate, rounded shapes. He draws the wing shapes of the upper lip; the fuller, lower lip; and the internal detail of the ear.

Step 3. The light comes from the left, and so the artist blocks in the big shadow that runs down the right side of the head, including the ear. He places shadows in the corners of the eye sockets; on one side of the nose and beneath it; on the upper lip, which tilts away from the light; beneath the lower lip; and at the tip of the chin. Finally, he darkens the hair.

Step 4. The artist reinforces the shadow shapes, faithfully following the shadow edge that first appeared in Step 1. With clusters of curving strokes, he darkens the big shadow shape on the side of the head and then intensifies the shadows on the features. The pencil point completes the hair, adds the details of the features, and reinforces the contours.

Urheberrechtlich geschütztes Material

Step 1. The artist visualizes the upper and lower arms as cylinders. He draws a center line through the upper arm to align the elbow and the center of the shoulder—which he defines as a sphere. The back of the hand is drawn as a square from which the thumb projects. Straight lines define the fingers. Parallel guidelines align the knuckles.

Step 2. When the artist draws the realistic contours, he retains the spherical form of the shoulder muscle and the tapering shape of the lower arm, adding the curves of the other muscles. As he draws the hand, he follows the curving guidelines of the knuckles. The thumb is only half the length of the hand; the tip of the thumb stops where the fingers begin.

Step 3. Blocking in the shadows, the artist follows the curves of the spherical shoulder muscle, the rounded back of the upper arm, and the tapered cylinder of the forearm. In this view, the back of the hand and the first joints of the fingers bend away from the light, so they're in shadow. The light strikes the protruding knuckles, plus the second and third joints.

Step 4. The artist renders the shadow as a continuous, flowing shape that follows the curves of the muscles down to the protruding knob of the wrist, which catches the light. He accentuates the shadows on the back of the hand and behind the knuckles. The pencil point reinforces the contours of the arm and hand, and then sharpens the details of the knuckles and fingernails.

Urheberrechtlich geschütztes Material

Step 1. The upper arm is drawn as two parallel guidelines with a curve for the shoulder. The lines of the forearm taper to the wrist. The palm is a boxlike shape; a curve defines the bulge of the muscle that connects to the thumb. Parallel lines locate the fingers. The palm and fingers are crossed by curving lines that locate the creases behind the knuckles.

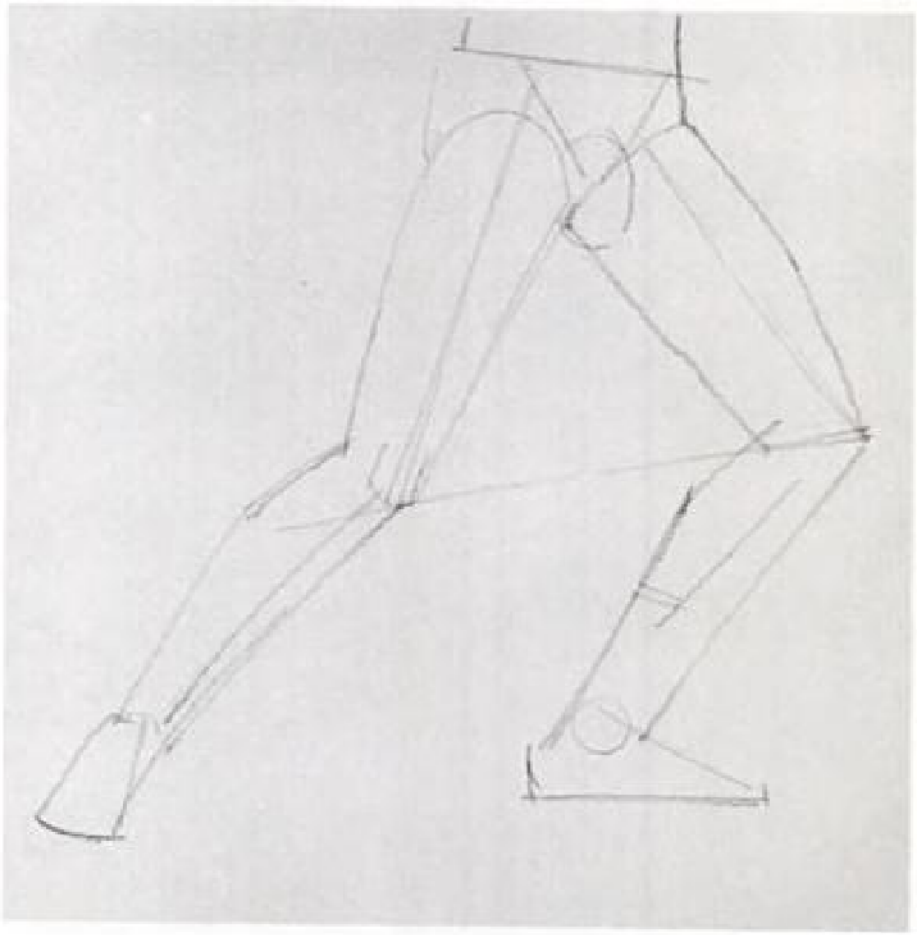
Step 2. The shoulder and upper arm flow together in a single curving line. The shoulder muscle overlaps the upper arm and flows into the breast. The forearm isn't exactly straight, but bends slightly as it approaches the wrist. The curves of the fingers follow the guidelines of Step 1, as do the creases that cross the hand. The length of the thumb is roughly equivalent to the palm.

Step 3. A slender shadow runs along the underside of the arm, continuing along the edge of the hand. The shadowy edge of the chest muscle flows into the breast. A strong shadow emphasizes the roundness of the big muscle that connects to the thumb. The fingers begin to look cylindrical as the artist adds hints of shadow to their edges.

Step 4. The artist darkens the shadowy edges and then adds subtle halftones in the lighted areas to suggest additional detail such as the inner edges of the shoulder muscle and the slender cords of the wrist. The fingers become rounder as he intensifies the shadows. The pencil point reinforces the creases in the palm, the insides of the knuckles, and the fingernails.

Urheberrechtlich geschütztes Material

Step 1. The preliminary line drawing visualizes the upper and lower legs as cylinders that taper toward the knees and ankles. In this pose, one knee is slightly lower than the other; the artist draws a sloping line between the knees to establish this relationship. As seen from the side, the foot is a triangle with a blocky heel and a circular knob for the protruding anklebone. The other foot, seen from the front, is a short, blocky wedge. Notice how the artist adds vertical center lines to both thighs and to one lower leg, just as he does when he draws the head or torso.



Step 2. The realistic line drawing emphasizes the muscular bulges of the thighs and the characteristic curves of the lower legs. The bulging muscles of the inner thigh and inner calf are particularly important in making a lifelike drawing of the leg. In drawing the feet, the artist rounds off the heels as separate shapes and emphasizes the bulge behind the big toe. Notice how the toes of the foot at the left all come down to the curving guideline that defined the end of the foot in Step 1.

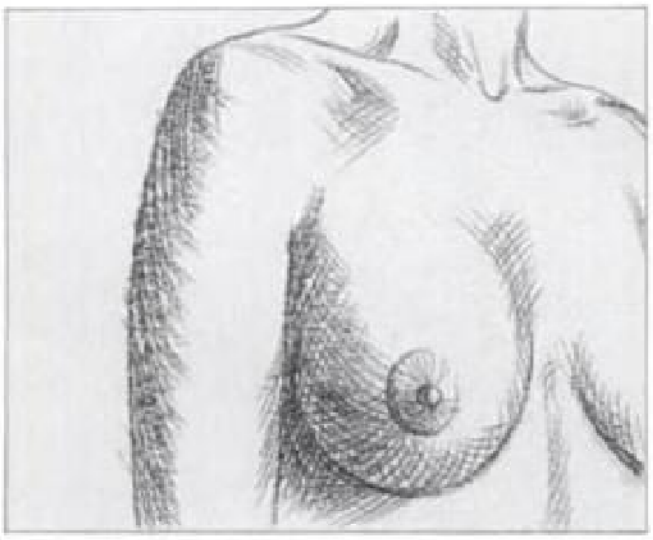
Urheberrechtlich geschütztes Material

Step 3. The artist observes that the light is coming from the upper right. The tops and right sides of the forms face the light, while the left sides and undersides turn away into shadow. You can see this most clearly in the head, where the face turns away from the light and all the features are in shadow; the light strikes only one side of the forehead, cheek, and jaw, as well as the ear and the very tip of the nose, which juts out of the shadow to pick up a small triangle of light. In the same way, the breasts turn upward and receive the light, but their undersides curve downward and away from the light, producing crescent-shaped shadows. The artist blocks in all the shadow shapes with the side of the lead, holding the pencil at an angle to the paper.

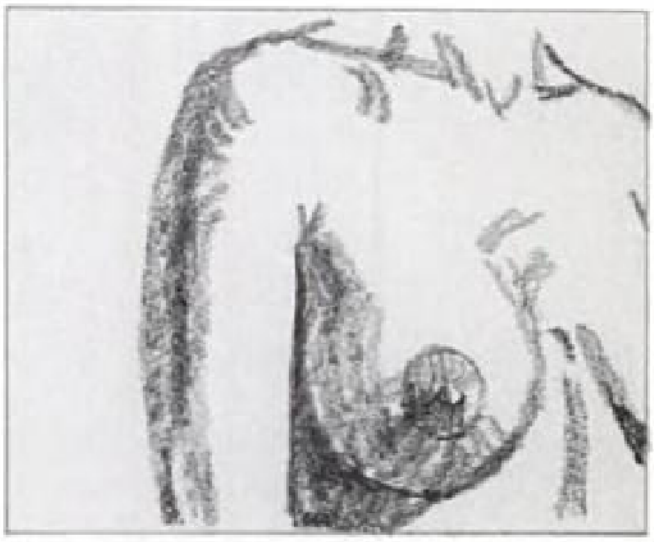
Urheberrechtlich geschütztes Material

Step 4. The completed drawing shows the four basic tones—light, halftone (or middletone), shadow, and reflected light—as well as a fifth tone that appears frequently, the cast shadow. You can see the gradation of four tones very clearly on the thigh at your left: the lighted top of the thigh, curving downward to a hint of halftone that quickly merges with the shadow, and finally the reflected light within the shadow along the lower edge of the thigh. You can see a similar gradation on the breasts, whose rounded forms cast dark shadows downward over the rib cage. Remember that the tones within the lighted planes are usually halftones—distinctly paler than the darks on the shadow side of the figure.

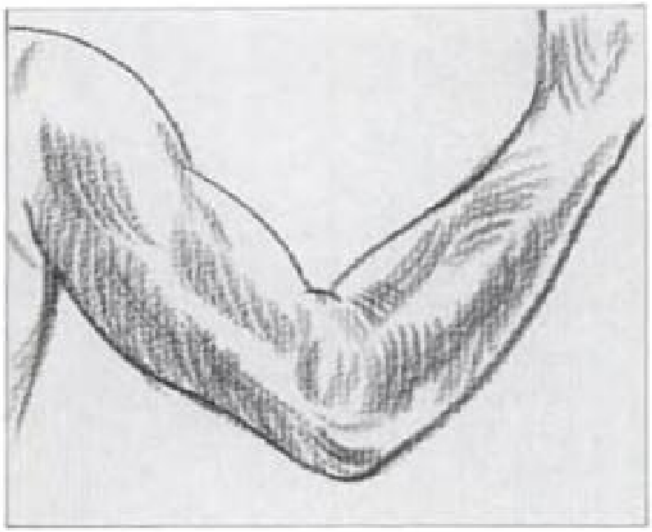
Urheberrechtlich geschütztes Material



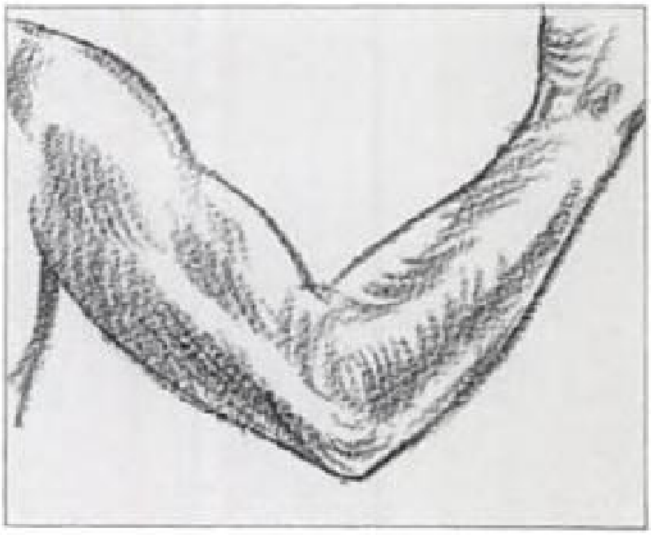
Slender Strokes. A simple and effective way to draw with the common graphite pencil is to work entirely with the sharpened point. The point draws the contours of the shapes and then blocks in the tones with slender strokes, drawn in parallel clusters like those you see here. To darken the tones, you can build stroke over stroke or just press harder on the pencil. To accentuate the roundness of the figure, the pencil strokes curve with the forms. The individual strokes "mix" in the eye of the viewer to create a sense of light and shade.



Broad Strokes. An equally effective way to draw the same subject is to turn the pencil at an angle to the paper and draw with the *side* of the lead, producing broader strokes than you can make with the sharpened tip. Or you can take a thick, soft pencil in the 4B–6B range and shape the lead to a broad, blunt point that makes wide strokes. The pencil behaves something like a flat brush, depositing large areas of tone with just a few strokes. Press harder or place one stroke over another to produce a darker tone like the edge of the shadow on the arm or the cast shadow beneath the breast.



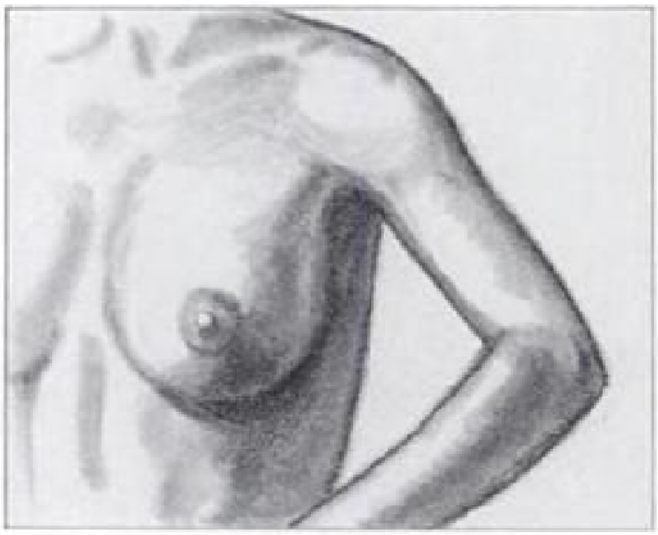
Strokes on Charcoal Paper. The delicately ribbed surface of the charcoal paper is just as effective for pencil drawing as it is for charcoal. The *tooth* of the paper, as it's called, breaks up and softens the stroke. Tiny flecks of bare paper show through the strokes. On smoother paper, these bold strokes, made with the thick lead of a 4B pencil, might look harsh; but they look subtle and luminous on charcoal paper. Charcoal paper has a remarkable way of adding vitality to the pencil stroke.



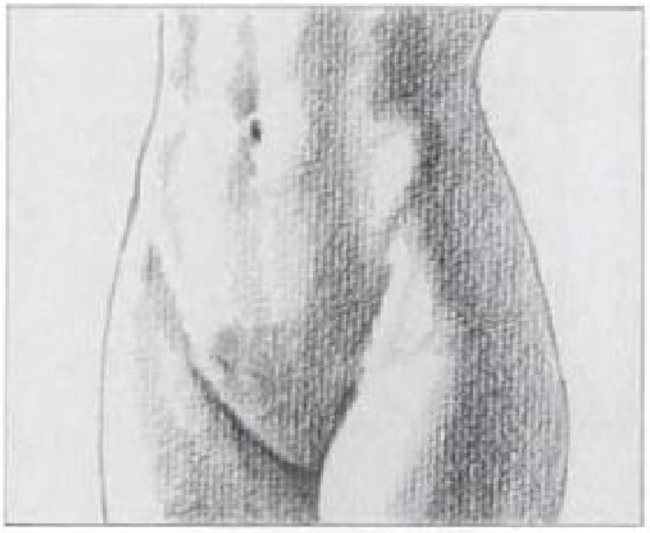
Strokes on Rough Paper. There are much rougher papers than charcoal paper. The pebbly texture of rough paper tends to break up the pencil stroke into a granular tone that looks rich and luminous because of all the tiny dots of bare paper that show through. The ragged tooth of the paper also forces you to work with big, bold strokes. Slender, elegant lines and precise details won't work on this drawing surface. It's good experience to work on rough paper because the drawing surface forces you to work boldly and simply. A few big, decisive strokes must do the job.

Urheberrechtlich geschütztes Material

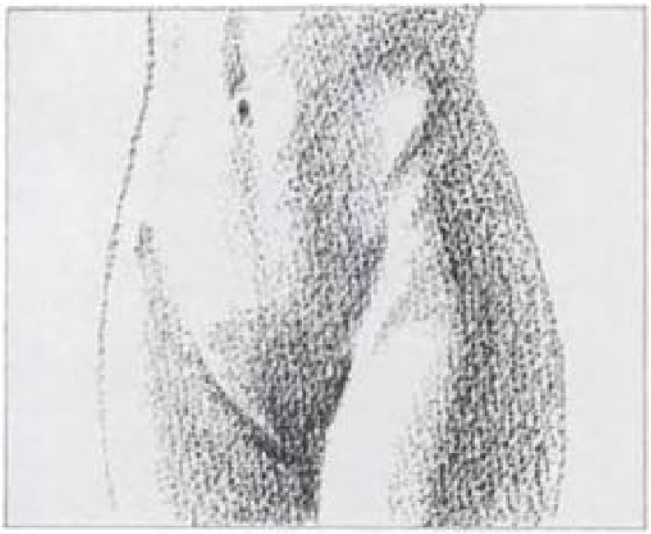
Modeling with Strokes. The blunt end of a stick of chalk builds up the tones with thick, curving strokes that follow the rounded contours of the forms. Notice how the strokes on the forearm, for example, actually curve around the cylindrical shape. In the same way, the strokes of the chalk wrap around the torso and breast. The artist piles one curving stroke over another to create stronger darks. The rounded, three-dimensional forms are created entirely by this buildup of curving strokes.



Modeling by Blending. Those same strokes can be blended with a fingertip or a paper stomp to create smooth, velvety tones. The artist begins by blocking in the tones with broad strokes, which he then merges with a back-and-forth movement of his fingertip. To strengthen the darks, he adds more strokes and blends these too. The stomp is used to get into tight corners, such as the shadowy armpit. A kneaded rubber eraser lifts away unnecessary tones to brighten the lighted areas. And the sharp corner of the rectangular chalk reinforces the contours with dark, slender lines.



Continuous Tone on Charcoal Paper. A sheet of charcoal paper has an intricate pattern of peaks and valleys. If you move a stick of chalk—or chalk in pencil form—lightly over the paper, the drawing tool hits only the peaks and skips over the valleys. If you don't press too hard and keep moving the drawing tool lightly back and forth, not a single stroke will show, but the granules of chalk will slowly build up. Rich, luminous tones will magically emerge, like the lights and shadows on this close-up of a female torso.

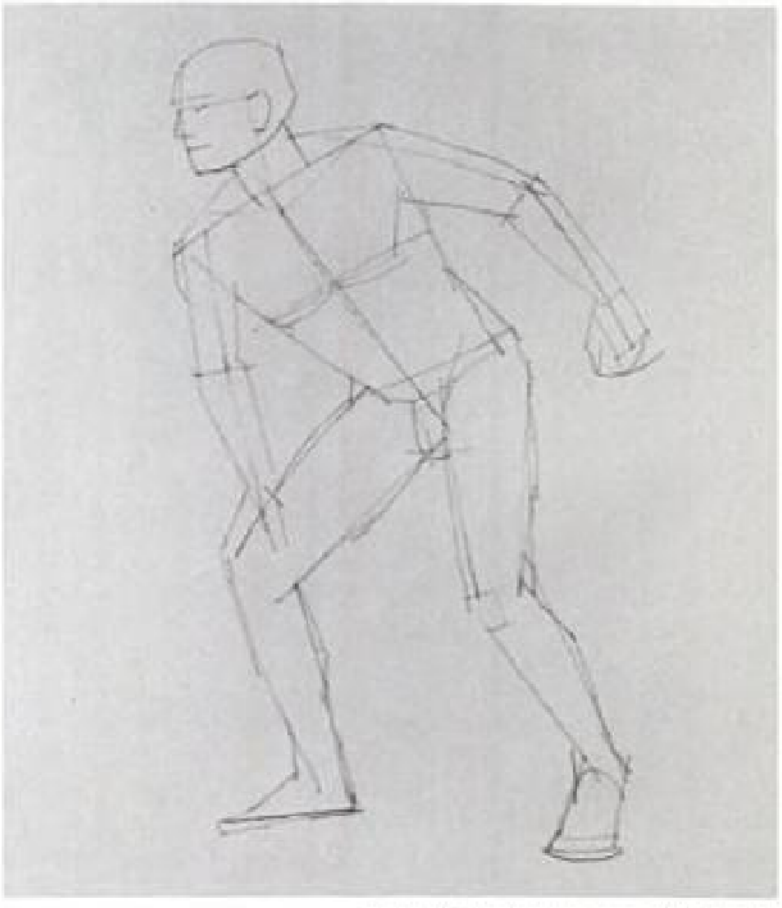


Continuous Tone on Rough Paper. You can achieve the same effect on any sheet of paper that has a pronounced tooth. The rougher the paper, the more quickly the tones will build up as you move the chalk back and forth, hitting the jagged peaks and skipping over the valleys. The blunt end of the chalk is used to build up the tone, while the sharp corner of the rectangular stick draws the linear contours of the hips.

Urheberrechtlich geschütztes Material

Step 1. A bending male figure—only a bit harder than an upright pose—will give you an opportunity to draw a complete figure in chalk. For this demonstration, the artist chooses a cylindrical stick of chalk in a plastic holder. The chalk is fairly thick, but it's easily sharpened on a sandpaper pad to make the slender lines of the preliminary "diagram." You'll notice that the guidelines are growing simpler. By now, many of these lines should be in your head; there's no need to place them all on paper unless you feel that they're necessary for a particular pose. Notice that nearly all the lines in this pose are diagonals; this is usually true when the model takes an active pose. The shoulder that leans forward is almost directly above the jutting knee of the leg on the left. The high shoulder on the right is above the crotch, while the elbow of the arm that swings backward is directly above the hip. An active pose won't be hard to draw if you record all these relationships correctly.

Step 2. When the artist constructs the forms of the figure over the "diagram" of Step 1, he reveals other relationships between the forms. The clenched fist is directly above the heel on the right, while the head is directly above the foot on the left. The undersides of the chest muscles align with the elbows of both arms, while the line of the crotch aligns, more or less, with the wrists. Although many alignments change with the pose, others tend to stay the same—and these are important too. For example, the guidelines that cross the torso to connect the shoulders, chest muscles, and hips are usually (though not always) parallel. And the pit of the neck, the division between the chest muscles, the navel, and the crotch *always* fall on the center line of the torso, even though that center line may curve slightly in some poses.



Urheberrechtlich geschütztes Material

Step 5. The artist picks up a large stomp and holds it at an angle to the paper. Thus, he works with the slanted side, rather than with its pointed tip. With vigorous strokes, he sweeps the stomp back and forth over the irregular drawing surface, blending the strokes that appeared in Step 4. These strokes quickly become dark, velvety tones as the granular chalk marks are blurred by the stomp. To blend smaller areas—particularly on the face, hands, and feet—the artist uses the sharp point of the stomp. Then, when the stomp is coated with chalk dust, he uses the cylindrical tool like a brush to add touches of halftone within the lighted areas of the figure. You can see these halftones around the shoulder blades and along the edge of the shadow that travels down the spine. He also adds a hint of halftone along the lighted edge of the leg and foot at the right.

Step 6. With a fingertip, the artist blends the rough tones of Step 5 more smoothly, producing more delicate gradations. The effect is obvious along the edges of the shadows, which now merge more softly with the lighted planes. He moves back into the shadows with a kneaded rubber eraser to create reflected lights. He squeezes the eraser to a rounded tip and presses it very gently against the shadow areas, lifting off small quantities of chalk. Then he goes over these areas with his finger to blend them once again. Now there are luminous reflected lights within the big shadow shapes of the back and the slender shadow shapes on the arms and legs. Squeezing the kneaded rubber to a sharp point, he picks out smaller areas of light, such as the elbow of the arm at the left and the bones of the spine. And he begins to reinforce selected darks with the chalk—in the hair, within the ear, beneath the chin, on the left arm, and along the outstretched leg.

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Step 7. In the process of blending, the original contours tend to disappear. The artist restates them now with the sharpened pastel pencil. He redefines the profile and features and adds some lines to the hair. For the last time, his fingertip travels gently over the shadows, blending them more smoothly and carrying a few more halftones into the lighted areas—particularly the lighted planes to the right of the spine and on the outstretched leg. He squeezes a kneaded rubber eraser to a point to brighten these lighted areas; now the completed drawing has a strong contrast between the lights and shadows. To heighten the impact of the dark figure against the white paper, the kneaded rubber moves around the outer edges of the figure, eliminating any stray tones that might soil the clean surface of the sheet.

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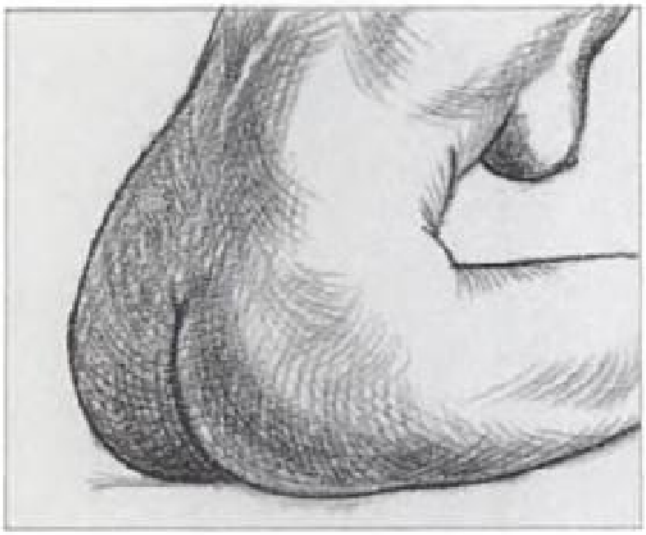
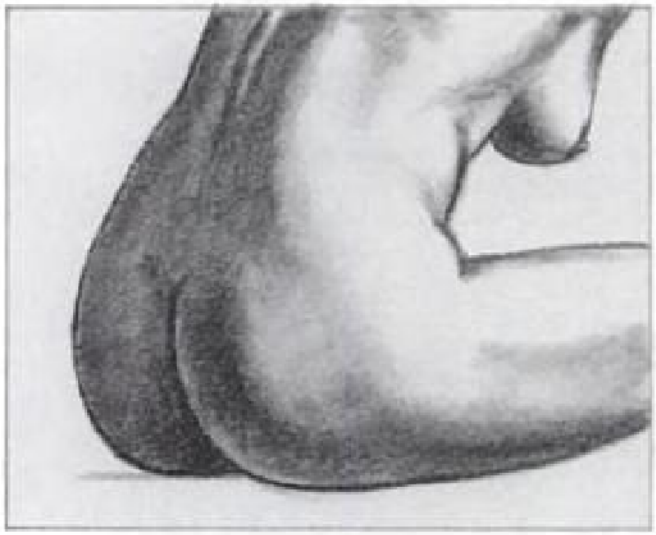
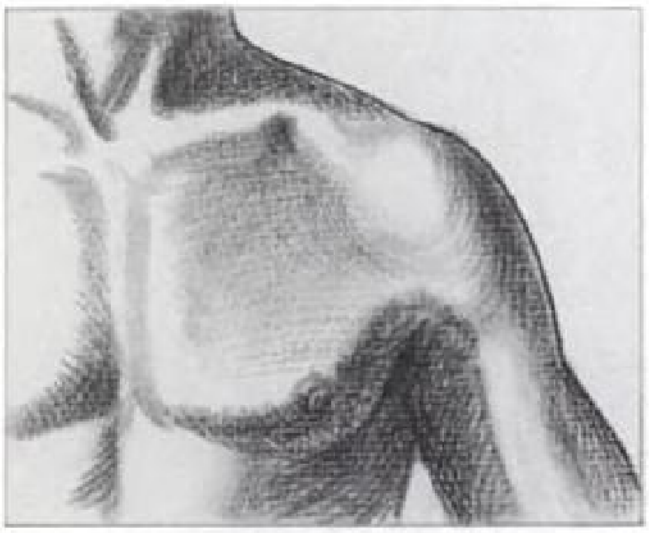


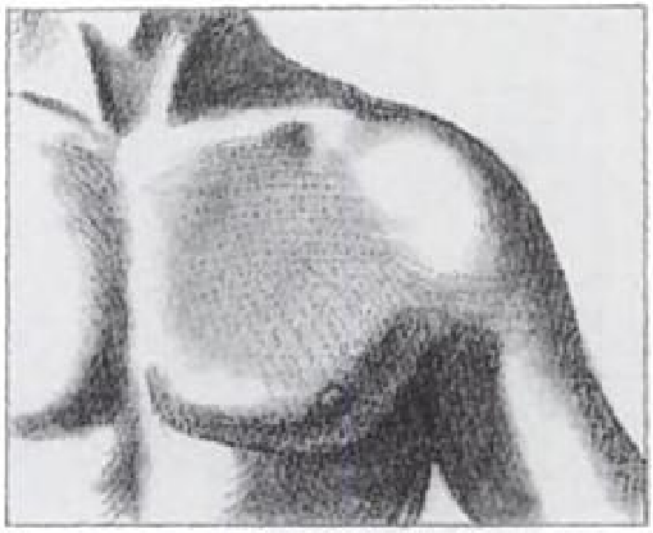
Modeling with Strokes. Charcoal is particularly effective for creating subtle gradations of tone. One way to do this is to gradually build up clusters of curving strokes that "mix" in the viewer's eye to become tones. A series of parallel strokes with slender spaces between them can suggest a halftone like the soft gray area on the side of the buttock or along the thigh. A second or third layer of strokes, placed close together, will produce a darker tone like the shadowy curve of that same buttock or the underside of the thigh.



Modeling by Blending. If you move your fingertip over the strokes you see at your left, they gradually disappear, fusing into smoky tones. For this blending technique, it's best to work with a medium or soft charcoal pencil, or with a stick of natural charcoal. To build up the dark contours along the undersides of the buttocks and breasts, the artist piles on more strokes and blends them with his fingertip. To create the halftones on the side of the buttocks and thigh, he just touches the paper with a few light strokes and blends them with a fingertip.



Strokes and Blending on Charcoal Paper. The outline of the shoulder is drawn with the sharp point of a medium charcoal pencil. The side of the lead blocks in the tones with broad strokes, blended by a fingertip. The pencil goes over these blended areas with parallel strokes that strengthen the shadows and accentuate the forms. You can see these blended tones, heightened with pencil strokes, along the shadowy edges of the arm and chest muscles. The strong darks along the neck and beneath the armpit are clusters of firm, unblended strokes.



Strokes and Blending on Rough Paper. Here's the same technique on a rougher sheet. Again, the artist draws the outlines with a medium charcoal pencil and then blocks in the tones with the side of the lead. He blends the tones with a stomp and reinforces the darks with the pencil. Thus, the darks along the side of the neck and shoulder, as well as those surrounding the armpit, have a particularly deep, powerful tone. The subtle halftone on the chest muscle is a soft blur, which the artist darkens slightly by letting his pencil glide lightly over the paper.

Urheberrechtlich geschütztes Material

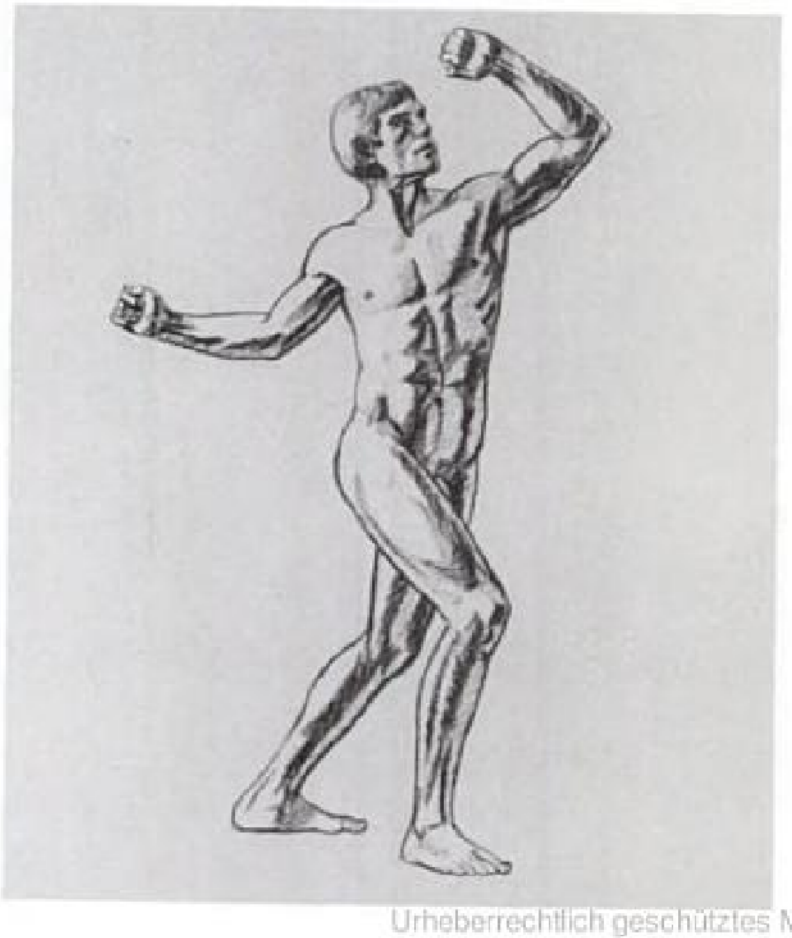
Step 1. Charcoal blends so easily that it's tempting to smudge every stroke to produce those wonderful, velvety tones, but it's best to begin by exploring what you can do with unblended lines and strokes. Try drawing some figures in which you render the contours with slender lines, made with the sharpened tip of the charcoal pencil, and render the tones with broad strokes by using the side of the lead. An action pose can be hard to draw, but the job becomes a lot easier if you plan the preliminary "diagram" carefully. The key to the pose is the curving center line that moves downward from the neck through the chest and navel to the crotch. Reflecting the curve of the center line, the edge of the torso at the right moves in the same direction—from the armpit all the way down to the knee. The inner line of that same thigh repeats the curve of the center line. The edge of the outstretched lower leg doesn't *curve* in the same direction, but it's roughly parallel with the side of the body. The lines of the upper arms all travel in the same direction.

Step 2. The artist begins to build up the anatomical forms. He draws the bulges of the shoulders over the connecting guideline and then defines the square shapes of the chest muscles that connect with the shoulders. On the abdomen, he indicates the lines of the stomach muscles on either side of the navel. He suggests the rounded form of the knee with a curving line. He accentuates the triangular shapes of the feet. Notice how the fists are divided into two halves to represent the palms and the group of clenched fingers. Finally, he adds more lines to stress the alignment of the jaw, neck muscle, pit of the neck, breastbone (where the chest muscles meet), navel, and crotch along the curving center line. This center line will continue to be the key to the action.

Urheberrechtlich geschütztes Material

Step 5. Pressing harder on the side of the lead of the medium charcoal pencil, the artist darkens the edges of the shadows where they meet the lighted planes of the figure. Suddenly, the figure grows more luminous as each shadow contains two tones: the dark and the reflected light. The artist works with bold, curving strokes, moving rapidly down the form. Sometimes the *shadow accent* (as the dark edge of the shadow is often called) is a single, thick, curving stroke, like those on the abdominal muscles. At other times, it's a series of short strokes placed side by side, as you can see on the upraised arm, the thighs, and the lower legs. The artist keeps focusing attention on that all-important center line, which he darkens with a series of strokes that start at the neck muscle, move down between the chest muscles and between the abdominal muscles, and then continue along the edge of the shadow on the rear leg.

Step 6. The sharpened tip of the charcoal pencil now moves around the contours of the figure, redefining the outlines. The artist pays particular attention to those places where one contour overlaps another, such as the shoulders, the biceps, and the inside corners of the elbows. These overlapping contours suggest that one form moves forward while another form moves behind it; thus, the body looks more solid and three-dimensional. The point of the pencil also begins to accentuate the details of the face, fingers, and toes. This is one of those drawings in which the artist could easily stop at this point: although not every part of the drawing is finished, there's just enough detail and just enough tone to make a lively, powerful drawing. But he goes on to Step 7 to show you the full range of tone that's possible with a medium-grade charcoal pencil.



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DEMONSTRATION 8. CROUCHING MALE FIGURE

Step 1. Try a combination of lines for the contours, plus strokes and selective blending for the tones. The artist works with hard and medium charcoal pencils, plus a natural charcoal stick, on a sheet of rough paper. The hard charcoal pencil executes an extremely simplified "diagram" of this action pose. To draw a dynamic pose like this crouching male figure, the most important thing is to record the directions of the lines accurately. It's often best to begin with the line of the back—a steep slant in this pose. The lines of the forward leg are almost horizontal and vertical, but not quite. Because the figure leans forward, the line of the shoulders is also slanted. In the leg that reaches back, we see only a bit of the thigh—which is in perspective—but we see most of the lower leg.

Step 2. As the artist builds up the construction lines of the figure, we see the shapes of the body more clearly, though they're still highly simplified. As always, the artist looks for alignments. The wrist of the upraised arm is directly above the line of the buttock and thigh. The chin is above the outstretched knee. The slanted line along the underside of the outstretched lower leg is parallel to the sloping line that runs along the underside of the torso; this torso line points to the tip of the chin. The top of the outstretched arm is parallel to the thigh of the outstretched leg. All the major lines of the figure are slanted, though some are steeper than others.

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Step 3. The point of the hard charcoal pencil curves around the shapes of the body, recording the anatomical forms and searching for rhythmic connections between lines. For example, the underside of the outstretched thigh is represented by a line that divides into two lines at the buttocks: one line curves around at the division between the buttocks and travels upward to become the spine, terminating at the back of the neck. The other line continues around the far buttock and travels along the far side of the back, flowing into the shoulder. Such big, flowing lines give the figure a feeling of dynamic rhythm.

Step 4. The light source is on the right, above and behind the figure. This creates an effect that's often called *rim lighting*. Most of the figure is in shadow, with just a bit of light creeping around the *rims* of the forms. With a stick of charcoal, the artist blocks in the big shapes of the shadows, letting the stick glide lightly over the roughly textured paper. The charcoal hits the high points of the pebbly surface; the tones become broken and granular, obliterating many of the lines of Step 3. Of course, these lines will reappear later on. The artist studies the shapes of the shadows carefully, paying particular attention to the zigzag shadow on the back, and the jagged shapes of the shadows on the shoulders.

Urheberrechtlich geschütztes Material

Step 5. A fingertip moves lightly over the granular tones of Step 4, softly fusing them into smoky shadows. The artist blends the smaller shapes—the profile of the face, the protruding finger, and the back muscles—with the tip of a stomp. Where the shape of a shadow needs to be defined more carefully, the artist squeezes the kneaded rubber eraser to a sharp point and moves the soft rubber around the edge. He does this on the intricate shadow shapes on the shoulders and he also brightens the back of the arm that rests on the knee. When you blend the tones of natural charcoal, it's important not to press too hard against the paper or you'll wipe off the charcoal, rather than simply spreading it around.

Step 6. The artist redefines the contours of the figure with sharp lines made by the point of a medium charcoal pencil. As he records the anatomical forms of the living model, he looks for those overlapping contours that make the muscles round and solid: the curve of the buttock overlaps the outstretched thigh, for example. These overlaps aren't always predictable; they vary from one pose to another. You can't just make them up—you've got to see them on the model! With the side of the lead, the artist builds up the edges of the shadows where they meet the lighted planes of the body. Now each shadow area contains darks and reflected lights. The point of the pencil also begins to define the details of the features, hands, and feet.

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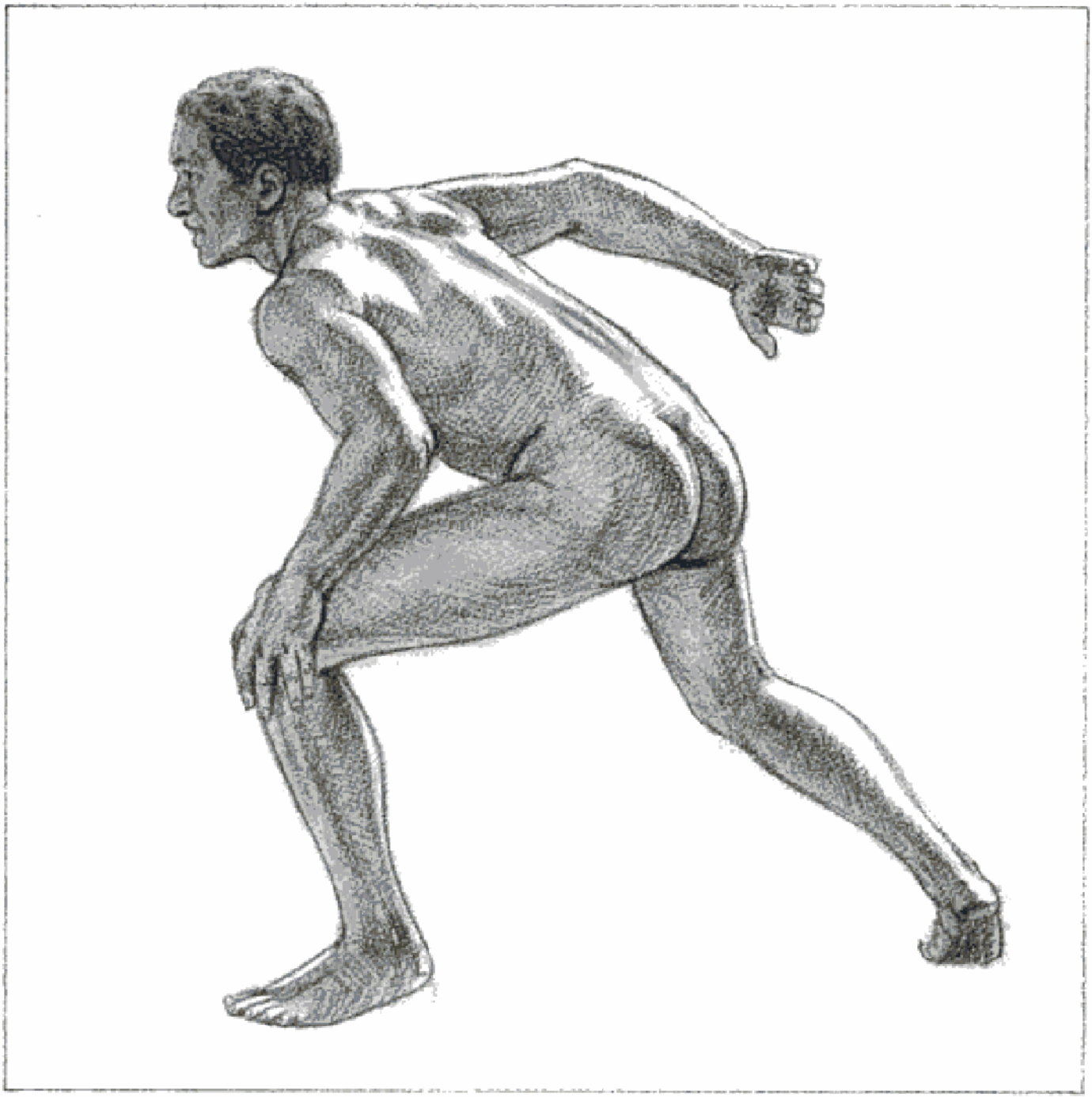

Step 7. Moving the side of the medium charcoal pencil lightly back and forth over the smoky shadows, the artist gradually strengthens and unifies the dark planes. He also defines the edges of the shadows more precisely. He doesn't blend these strokes, but allows them to retain the granular texture of the rough paper. As the shadow areas become darker, the figure becomes more three-dimensional because of the stronger contrast between light and shadow. You may have noticed that the line of the spine has gradually disappeared; the tilt of the spine is important to the action of the figure, and so now the artist redraws the slender, shadowy trough at the center of the back and carefully blends the tone with the sharp tip of the stomp. The point of the pencil also adds sharp touches of darkness in small but critical areas such as the underside of the nose, ear, and chin; the underside of the hand that rests on the knee; the crease at the waist; and the underside of the buttock above the outstretched rear leg. These crisp blacks add sparkle to the drawing. Finally, the tip of the pencil completes the details of the features, hands, and feet. A few more touches of the kneaded rubber eraser brighten the lighted areas of the body and clean away any smudges of gray that may have strayed onto the white paper surrounding the figure.

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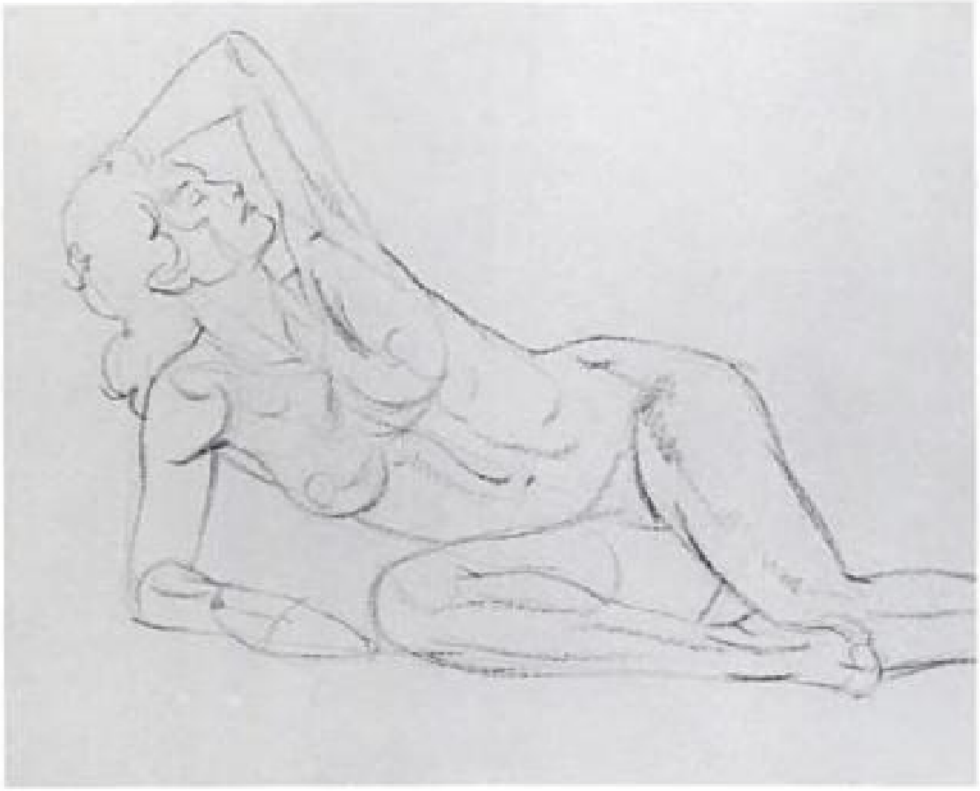

Step 3. The purpose of this demonstration is to show you how to combine linear contours with blended tones for the shadows. The artist has chosen a sheet of charcoal paper and started work with a medium charcoal pencil. Now he switches to a stick of natural charcoal that makes a rougher, more irregular line. He redraws the contours with big, swinging arm motions that give a particular roundness to the forms and a lovely, loose quality to the lines. Notice how a single flowing line moves from the point of the upraised elbow all the way down to the angle of the knee at the lower right. The artist also begins to suggest the edges of the shadows.

Step 4. Holding the natural charcoal at an angle and letting it brush lightly over the textured surface, the artist blocks in the shadows with loose back-and-forth movements, producing clusters of broad parallel strokes. The artist pays particular attention to the curving shapes of the shadows that accentuate the rhythm of the figure. For example, a single strip of shadow curves downward from the point of the raised elbow, over the arm, around the breast, and down through the center line of the torso. The light source is above the figure and slightly to the right, and so the left sides of the forms and their undersides are in shadow.

Urheberrechtlich geschütztes Material

Step 5. The strokes that fill the shadow areas are blended with light touches of a fingertip. The artist rubs just hard enough to merge the charcoal strokes into smoky tones, but *not* hard enough to obliterate the roughness of the strokes entirely. He moves his fingertip cautiously around the lighted areas to avoid any danger of obscuring the shapes of the lights. He uses his charcoal-coated fingertip to place a delicate touch of halftone on the lighted side of the midriff, suggesting the details of the ribs, which stand out in this pose. The original outlines are beginning to disappear beneath the blended tones. They'll soon reappear.

Step 6. Again holding the stick of natural charcoal at an angle to the paper, the artist builds up the dark edges of the shadows—the shadow accents—where they meet the light. Then he blends these darkened edges with his fingertip, being careful not to spread darkness into the paler areas of the shadows, which are the important reflected lights. Now there are three distinct tones flowing together—light, shadow, and reflected light—which you can see most clearly on the breasts beneath the upraised arm. The artist sharpens the charcoal stick to suggest the details of the sitter's curls and the shadows between the fingers.

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Step 1. In this final demonstration, the artist shows you the full richness of blended tones that you can achieve with a complete "palette" of charcoal pencils, blended with the finger and stomp, and brightened with that miraculous kneaded rubber eraser. As you'll see in a moment, he chooses a figure that's in deep shadow, with just a few touches of bright light; within these deep shadows, there will be rich variations of tone. The preliminary "diagram" of the figure is drawn with the sharpened point of a hard charcoal pencil. There are very few guidelines now—they should really be in your head.

Step 2. The sharp point of the hard charcoal pencil completes the construction lines. Now you can see the alignments more clearly. The forward edge of the leaning torso runs parallel with the forward edge of the lower leg at the left; both are diagonals. The inner edge of the other calf runs upward into the inner edge of the arm that rests on the knee. Both elbows align with the undersides of the chest muscles. On the right, the forehead, nose, fist, and forearm all align with the forward edge of the lower leg. At the left, the inner edge of the forearm continues down into the buttocks, whose curving line points toward the heel. As you study the drawing, you'll discover still other alignments like these.

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Step 3. The realistic contours are redrawn with the hard charcoal pencil. Notice the line that starts at the point of the elbow on the left, flowing upward over the back of the arm, into the shoulder, and then continuing behind the neck over the opposite shoulder. The back of the lower leg on the left flows diagonally upward, disappears briefly at the knee, and then reappears as the line along the underside of the thigh at the right. The small patches of light are particularly important in this shadowy figure. You can see their outlines along the top of the upraised shoulder, on the opposite shoulder and chest, along the edges of the arm and lower leg at the right, along the top of the other thigh, and on the front of the head.

Step 4. Switching to a medium charcoal pencil, the artist flattens the side of the lead by rubbing it against the sandpaper pad. Then he blocks in the shadows with broad parallel strokes. The medium charcoal pencil is softer and darker than the hard pencil, and the pebbly tooth of the paper shaves off big granules. At this stage, the shadows have a ragged, broken texture. To accentuate the shadows along the left side of the torso, the dark tone of the hair, and the other touches of darkness at the pit of the neck, between the chest muscles, and at the joints, the artist presses the pencil more firmly against the paper, building heavier strokes over the original strokes. Notice how methodically the artist follows the shapes of the shadows that are defined by the line of Step 3.

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FIGURE DRAWING
STEP • BY • STEP
WENDON BLAKE

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